

Support for the Mass + Main proposal

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Tue 5/12/2015 9:16 PM

City Clerk Agenda

To:City Council <CityCouncil@CambridgeMA.GOV>;

Cc:Lopez, Donna <dlopez@cambridgema.gov>;

Dear City Councilors,

I have previously submitted letters in support of the Mass + Main proposal. Those letters have focused on the ways in which this proposal is responsive to the housing crisis in Cambridge and the need for additional affordable housing. Additionally this project's location will make it possible for tenants to rely on public transportation, critically important in tackling the city's on-going issues with parking and traffic and goal of reducing green house gas emissions.

Having just last Saturday gone on the annual Jane Jacobs Walk, by now an established tradition in Cambridge, I am reminded of some of the principles she espoused and their relevance to the Mass + Main project. I have no training as a city planner, architect or other relevant profession, but I have lived in cities for most of my life, walk as much as possible for both recreational and business purposes, and increasingly realize the relevance of Jacobs' common sense approach to what makes neighborhoods safe, pleasant and economically successful. Jacobs advocated mixed primary uses so that streets were active at different times of the day. A residential complex with retail on the ground floor accomplishes this, in stark contrast to a building that is entirely office or lab space. Jacobs recognized the importance of short blocks and pedestrian permeability. The Mass + Main project is proposing a walkway connecting Jill Rhone Park to the city lot, extending public uses on the edges of the project and ensuring an active urban experience. Finally Jacobs stressed the importance of density. If approved, the Mass + Main project will increase active urban uses and density in this part of Central Square.

I urge you to vote favorably on the proposed Mass+Main mixed-income residential district that includes an unprecedented 47 new affordable housing units in Central Square.

Sincerely,

Robin Finnegan

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